Dear David, you are turning 90 this year, and what a nice coincidence and an honor to be invited to interview you on your life’s work. Let me start with the present and go backwards in time. What is closest to your heart these days?

Together with Silvia Boadella, I am very happy with how Biosynthesis has developed over the last thirty-five years — since 1985. Our hearts are deeply touched by the gratitude shown to us by our students and patients, and by our many trainers, including you, Lily, who have enriched Biosynthesis for many decades with their own unique creativity.

An important part of this development was when I founded the journal *Energy and Character*, in 1970, as a medium for publishing articles not only about Biosynthesis, but from the whole community of body psychotherapists. Peter Freudl created a content archive on the internet.

The past has sown the seeds for the present and for new developments in the future. Currently Silvia and I are completing a thousand-page book on our method, which we hope will be published in 2021.

I have known you for over 35 years, and what made me want to meet you had no direct connection to psychotherapy. I had heard that you had written a thesis on D. H. Lawrence and the body. I was at the time reading all of his books, and I felt, Oh! here is a kindred soul. You didn’t start as a psychotherapist. So, what brought you to the field, and how did your background influence your work? How important is it for psychotherapy to have roots in other fields of knowledge?

In 1950, I was deeply influenced by the English author D. H. Lawrence. His view of life, love, and sexuality was in many ways similar to Reich, who I discovered in 1952. My first book, *The Spiral Flame* (Ritter Press, 1956), explored these connections in depth. Against this background, I decided to train in education, where I could influence what Reich called “the children of the future.” I took my training in Vegetotherapy in parallel, in the early fifties. For me, psychotherapy needs to link with re-education, social awareness, and somatic knowledge based on neuroscience. In addition, it needs to be open to explore the transpersonal roots of being human.

Who do you consider to be your great teachers, people you are grateful to, people you learned a lot from?

My most important influences, after Reich, were the following:

- Paul Ritter, with whom I trained for five years in Vegetotherapy.
- Ola Raknes, with whom I took additional Vegetotherapy sessions.
- Nic Waal, a Reichian doctor from Norway, who wrote me in 1952 warning of the importance of not pushing clients into catharsis if they had weak boundaries or borderline tendencies.
- Stanley Keleman, the founder of Formative Psychology in California, who was a close colleague and friend for sixty years.
- Frank Lake, who developed the understanding of polarity tendencies in character development. He was the founder of Clinical Theology, which emphasized the treatment of prenatal disturbances.
- Bob Moore, a Danish teacher of psychosomatic principles and energetic meditations.
In your long journey what did you find easy, what was difficult, and what was truly inspiring?

What I found easy was working with the body and learning to read body signals. I worked with my first client in 1956, and helped him to overcome his compulsive and rigid tendencies until he learned to trust himself enough to find his first secure relationship with a woman.

What I found difficult was organizing trainings. I traveled a lot at the invitation of others in many countries, but I was not a good organizer.

What was truly inspiring was my relationship with Silvia, who was and still is a very creative therapist and trainer, but also an exceptionally good organizer. She created the International Institute for Biosynthesis (IIBS) in Zürich in 1985, and we have combined our skills together ever since then.

As I grow older, I feel a certain inner alignment that is expressed in an inner certainty, something in me says, “I was right.” Do you also feel this?

Yes, I have this feeling you describe when I can get beyond stress, relax, and learn to trust the deeper messages from my body, and be in contact with my deeper self and with the hearts of others. In Biosynthesis, this relates to what we call the essence, or what Donald Winnicott calls the “true self.”

We say every method is somehow influenced by its creator. How do you think the person David Boadella shows through Biosynthesis?

I think a deep aspect of my personality is the understanding of the three lifestreams: centering, grounding, and facing. In 1975, I was offered a one-hour massage by three group members I had met in a weekend workshop in Albany, USA. Against all expectations, I accepted this offer. The session was the deepest I had experienced in my life, and lasted four hours after the massage was finished.

The session was given by a man, his wife, and his sister. The man had weak boundaries, but helped me to find my boundaries and to strengthen my grounding. His wife had problems with her own breathing, but helped me to go deeper into my center and trust my own inner rhythms. His sister had difficulties in making eye contact, but helped me face her and others with my deeper feelings.

On returning to England, I met Stanley Keleman, who told me that this five-hour session was like a baptism after immersion in deep waters. Out of this deep personal encounter, I learned to trust myself and others much more than before, and began to teach the principle of the three lifestreams, which is at the foundation of Biosynthesis. This also opened up important links to the understanding of embryology in its relation to the development of the body as a whole.

What criticisms have you received about Biosynthesis, and which ones do you consider to be valid? I know, for example, how you had to support concepts of energy and spirituality in modern views of psychotherapy, which have difficulty with the scientific aspect of these concepts.

We have received on the whole very little criticisms from within body psychotherapy. Rather, I have been invited to teach within many other modalities, which have welcomed learning about Biosynthesis. I always had good contact with Alexander Lowen and with Gerda Boyesen.

An exception is a recent critique of the transpersonal aspects of any therapy, including ours, from the Gestalt therapist Peter Schulthess, published in a Swiss journal of psychotherapy. This has opened a debate within the EAP, with many articles published on the relationship between psychotherapy and spirituality, including my response “Boundaries to the Transpersonal.”

Also, my earlier article, “Essence and Ground” was first published by the EAP in the International Journal of Psychotherapy.

There have been great changes in body psychotherapy over its short life. Which ones do you like in particular?

Body psychotherapy began to organize its first congress in 1979, in Davos, Switzerland. I was elected as the first president of the EABP at Seefeld, Austria, in 1981. We created the Board and the various subcommittees, which have continued to this day. The biggest changes have been the emphasis on the importance of research and the publishing of an extensive bibliography of body psychotherapy books and articles.

How do you see the modern trend of supporting our work with neuroscience findings?

Neuroscience is an important part of psychosomatics, so an understanding of how the brain works is part of understanding the body. However, we have to be very careful not to identify with reductive materialism, which sees the brain as creating the mind.

Many years ago, I received a letter from the quantum physicist David Bohm, who sent me his book Wholeness and the Implicate Order. Bohm was emphasizing mutual influences between matter and mind, without reducing one to the other. He called their interaction “soma significance.” In Biosynthesis, we speak of soma semantics, the meanings of the body. An important chapter I wrote on this was published in the Handbook of Body Psychotherapy (Marlock et al., 1985).

I think Biosynthesis is especially important today for young people as our culture becomes less and less embodied, and human contact becomes more and more virtual. What do you think?
Young people implies not only young adults, but also children. For nearly thirty years of my life, I worked with children in parallel with working with adults. Each process helped the other. My work with maladjusted children was the basis of my master’s degree in education (1960). This work was influenced deeply by my therapeutic knowledge. An article published about me in an educational journal when I was a headmaster was called “The Head with the Healing Hands.” The work with children also greatly helped my psychotherapeutic work with adults.

Both approaches involved embodiment and touch, which classical therapies avoid. In the corona age, verbal contact with clients, or school children, can be maintained, but touch goes out of reach.

In Biosynthesis, Silvia and I developed the concept of the four elements of touch at a workshop in Greece in 1984. The four elements are earth touch related to boundaries, water touch related to the flow of movement, air touch related to inner rhythms and breathing, and fire touch related to the transmission of warmth through the hands in the energy field. At the same time, we developed important principles regarding the ethics of touch. All this is much more difficult to communicate through virtual contact.

What is your vision for the future of Biosynthesis? How would you like to see it developing?

An important principle within Biosynthesis is the understanding of the seven life fields of experience. These are closely related to the seven segments of the body as recognized by Wilhelm Reich. The life fields are a common basis in all trainings in Biosynthesis which have developed in many countries.

Silvia and I formed the European Association for Biosynthesis (EABS) in 1988, the Overseas Association for Biosynthesis (OABS) in 1990, and the International Foundation for Biosynthesis (IFB) in 1991. Since then, many different national and regional institutes have been developed, led by creative trainers who invite leaders from other countries. Lily, you are yourself a wonderful example of what you have created in your own country, Greece, but also in sharing your training skills with many Biosynthesis Institutes from other countries.

I hope very much that this mutual connectedness will continue during the coming years. It is greatly helped by Biosynthesis Institutes, organizing in different countries international therapist meetings, conferences and congresses.

Anything else you would like to add that I didn’t give you the chance to talk about?

I would like to emphasize that there is in Biosynthesis a deep connection between theory and practice. This means that our students, or clients, are also our teachers, and that we learn new principles and methods in our interactions with the uniqueness of individual developments. In this sense, the therapist does not cure the client, but provides an environment of care within which the client is able to develop a self-cure.

Lily Anagnostopoulou, PhD, is a psychologist and psychotherapist. She is the Founder and Director of the Greek Biosynthesis Centre, an International Senior Trainer in Biosynthesis, and President of EABS. She has a BA in psychology from Deree College, Greece, and a PhD from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. She has studied Biosynthesis with David and Silvia Boadella, Bioenergetics with Alexander Lowen, hypnosis with Ernest Rossi and Nachi Alon, Group Analysis at the Institute for Group Analysis, Greece, Jungian Dream Analysis with Winnifred Rushforth, Rogerian Counseling at the University of Edinburgh, and Family Systems with Vasso Vassiliou. Lily has worked for many years as a psychotherapist in private practice, as a school psychologist, and a university teacher. Currently, she primarily works as an international trainer of Biosynthesis and likes big group events because of the powerful healing field they create.